

**Impacts and strategic outcomes from non-mega sport events  
for local communities<sup>i</sup>**

Marijke Taks (University of Windsor), [mtaks@uwindsor.ca](mailto:mtaks@uwindsor.ca)

Laurence Chalip (University of Illinois), [lchalip@illinois.edu](mailto:lchalip@illinois.edu)

B. Christine Green (University of Illinois), [cgreen@illinois.edu](mailto:cgreen@illinois.edu)

The staging of sport events directly impacts the quality of life of people living in the host communities. Sport events are temporal and can trigger a variety of short- or long-term, positive or negative impacts, which lead to positive or negative outcomes, and if sustained, these outcomes have been called “legacies”. Impacts may result from strategic planning, but more often than not there is scant strategic planning for event outcomes, so impacts are typically haphazard and unplanned (albeit hoped for). Strategic planning for event outcomes (aka: leveraging) differs from mere legacy planning because it focuses attention on the means to obtain desired economic, social, and/or environmental objectives through integration of each event into the host community’s overall product and service mix (Chalip, 2014). Whereas legacy planning focuses on the event and the outcomes it might render for the community, event leverage focuses on the community and the ways that it can integrate each event into its marketing and management strategies. These are different in ways that are subtle but important in practice.

Most of the research thus far has focused on economic and tourism impacts of mega-events, which are closely related. It is unclear how or whether small and medium sized events actually affect the overall wellbeing of people living in the host community, especially from a non-monetary perspective such as social life, urban regeneration, sport participation, environmental stewardship, or infrastructure. This special issue brings together work that

analyzes a variety of tangible and intangible impacts, including economic, tourism, social and sport participation impacts<sup>ii</sup>. It specifically addresses the strategic choices that host communities make when hosting non-mega events, including outcomes of those choices.

While there are no universal definitions of different types of events, non-mega sport events are generally smaller in size, scale, scope and reach than their mega counterparts (e.g., the Olympic Games, the World Cup, the Euro Cup, the Commonwealth Games). However, like mega events, they are one-off, discontinuous and out of the ordinary. This special issue covers a range of perspectives and impacts from a variety of non-mega sport events, including spectator and participant events, single-sport and multi-sport events, one-day and multi-day events. These events may attract local residents and/or visitors, and may be hosted in different types of cities and communities around the globe. (Four contributions are from Europe, two from Canada and one from Australia).

### **Economic Impact and Strategic Outcomes of Non-Mega Sport Events**

Most research on economic impact of sport events uses standard input/output economic impact analysis (EIA), which is formulated in a manner likely to find positive outcomes both for **mega** (e.g., Kesenne, 2012) and **non-mega** sport events (Taks, Green, Chalip, Kesenne, & Martyn, 2013; Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Green, & Martyn, 2011), because standard EIA only takes into account the new and additional money coming into the city or region. There is, however, a strong call among sport economist to perform cost-benefit analyses (CBA) rather than EIA analyses, because only CBA estimates net benefits for host communities. From an economic impact perspective, it therefore makes sense to redefine events based on the resources needed and the resources available to stage the event and to host the participants and spectators

(Agha & Taks, in revision). Using this definition, it is clear that smaller scale events require fewer resources, and are therefore more likely to generate more positive (or less negative) economic outcomes than mega sport events.

The economic perspective in this special issue by Mackellar focusses on business leveraging. Following Chalip and Leyns's (2002) paper, Mackellar studies three regional sport events (a triathlon, a marathon, and a sailing regatta) in three Australian cities and reveals six determinants of business engagement: (1) event cooperation, (2) tourism dependency, (3) business size, (4) promotion, (5) strategic direction, and (6) skills, knowledge and inertia. She emphasizes that "the ability of local businesses to engage with a regional sport event is also critical to the economic contribution to the community, as well as the continued success of the event, and to the satisfaction of event visitors".

### **Tourism Impacts and Strategic Outcomes of Non-Mega Sport Events**

Flow-on tourism for non-mega sport events is possible (e.g., Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012) but evidence shows that it is rather limited (Snelgrove, Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2008). In this special issue Pereira and colleagues demonstrate that tourism can be enhanced through strategic leveraging of a portfolio of six nautical small-scale sports events in a city in Portugal. The portfolio approach, together with cross leveraging, enhanced coordination, and planning ancillary events are the necessary strategies to create positive tourism outcomes for the host community (see also Chalip, 2004; Ziakas & Costa, 2011).

### **Socials Impacts and Strategic Outcomes of Non-Mega Sport Events**

Much of the evidence of the capacity of sport events to enhance social unity is on mega sport events and emphasizes feelings of euphoria, enhanced national pride, and unity (e.g., Heere, Walker, Gibson, Thapa, Geldenhuys, & Coetzee, 2013). The well-intended rhetoric about the social outcomes of sport events are generally hoped for and desired, as opposed to being planned for (Chalip, 2006), and much of the research is anecdotal (Smith, 2009). Taks (2013) contrasted and compared social impacts and outcomes of mega sport events and non-mega sport events using four different perspectives: power relations, urban regeneration, **socialization**, and human capital. Overall, non-mega sport events appear to provide opportunities for more positive (or less negative) social impacts and outcomes for host communities compared to mega sport events. This is based on the assumption that non-mega sport events allow for the creation of tighter social networks and connectedness of the local population with the event (Taks, 2013). Misener and Mason (2006) emphasized the importance of embracing the core values of residents, community groups, and neighbourhood associations as a condition to create positive impacts from events. Embracing these core values is also more plausible for non-mega sport events compared to mega sport events. Non-mega sport events permit more reciprocity in host communities, thereby enhancing opportunities for creating outcomes that will best serve that community. However, accurate social impact assessments of events are missing and measuring these impacts is extremely complex (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Fredline, Deery, & Jago, 2013). This special issue showcases two contributions that focus on social impacts and strategic outcomes of non-mega sport events.

Djaballah and colleagues investigate the social impact of non-mega sporting events using a sensemaking approach based on local governments' perceptions and strategies. They analyze understandability and controllability of social outcomes among key stakeholders in local

governments of 25 medium sized cities in France, which each hosted a non-mega sport event (mainly spectator sport). Interestingly, government officials were more concerned with the management of negative social impacts as opposed to stimulating positive social impacts. Strategies to enhance social impacts include: organizer relationship management, direct management, community mobilization, and partnerships with local corporations.

Kerwin and colleagues address social impacts exploring a sense of community among small-scale sport event volunteers. They focus on a 4-day long, single/participant/small-scale sport event (canoe/kayak) hosted in a small to mid-sized community in Ontario (Canada). The authors underline that volunteerism is a collective experience and a direct outcome of social capital. They emphasize that small-scale sport event volunteer experiences provide the social bonding opportunities needed to create a sense of community. Furthermore the authors highlight that small-scale sport events typically rely upon the limited-size local community to comprise its voluntary workforce, as well as the multi-role nature of volunteer activities within a small-scale event. The latter confirms the higher potential for personal growth (i.e., “human capital”) of people in the host community for non-mega sport events compared to mega sport events (see also Taks 2013; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014).

### **Sport Participation Impacts and Strategic Outcomes of Non-Mega Sport Events**

Sport participation impact is a derivative of social impact. Since sport is at the core of sport events, a sport participation outcome from sport events would seem to be a reasonable expectation. Claims that sport events will foster sport participation are based on the notion of the so called “trickle-down”, “demonstration” or “inspiration” effects. Evidence supporting this “trickle-down effect” is mainly focused on major sporting events indicating that the effects are

limited at best, and are most likely to result from retaining existing participants rather than recruiting new participants (Weed, Coren, & Fiore, 2009). Evidence from non-mega sport events shows potential for personal growth and skill development of local residents (e.g., through volunteering, officiating, organizing) which benefits sport development opportunities in host communities (Taks, Misener, Chalip, & Green, 2013; Taks et al., 2014). In the rare cases where facilities are upgraded or built for non-mega sport events, the facilities are likely to be upgraded or built with community needs in mind, thereby assuring long-term use by the community, which is central for sustainable sport participation development. Three contributions in this special issue discuss the link between non-mega sport events and sport participation strategies and outcomes.

Girish and colleagues evaluate sport participation outcomes of nine non-mega spectator sport events in the UK. Their quantitative approach reveals different types of increases in post event participation **behavior** of both previously active and inactive respondents, including “initial”, “sustained” and “lagged” effects. However, the authors underscore that attributing causality is problematic and that the market development effects are unproven.

Derom and Van Wynsberghe focus on the leveraging of a participant cycling event in Flanders with the intention to enhance the level of physical activity. Through social ecological theory the authors reveal strategies such as the strategic use of Flanders’ cycling heritage, bicycle tourism and active participation in cycling. Their major recommendation is for greater cooperation between different levels of government.

The final contribution by Misener discusses leveraging opportunities of parasport events for community participation. Based on the hosting of the The Ontario Parasport Games in four cities, a theoretical Para Sport Leveraging (PSL) framework is developed. Positive community

outcomes include greater levels of accessibility, enhanced perceptions of disability, and greater levels of citizen participation in community life. The keys to this framework that differentiate it from others that have been discussed are its: (a) focus on disability sport, which presents a unique opportunity to leverage events, (b) setting within the context of the broader policy environment, (c) placement of local community values at the core of leveraging efforts, and (d) assigning responsibility for leveraging efforts outside of the local organizing committee.

### **Unique Features, Impact and Strategic Outcomes of Non-Mega Sport Events**

The potential for tighter social networks and connectedness of the local population with the event, be it as politicians, spectators, volunteers, marketing destination managers, or event organizers, makes **non-mega events** significantly different from **mega events** with regard to their effect on local communities (e.g., Taks, 2013). However, inherent features of **non-mega events** are not sufficient in and of themselves to explain their higher potential for creating desired outcomes. All contributions in this special issue emphasize the importance of “taking action” or leveraging of events (e.g., Chalip, 2004, 2006). Necessary strategies and tactics to create desired outcomes need to be developed and implemented. Similar to sponsorship activation (O’Keefe, Titlebaum, Hill, 2009), an organizational entity (e.g., politicians, local sport organizations, local businesses, marketing destination organizations, etc.) can associate with an event, and can incorporate an event into their own (marketing) efforts to attain predetermined goals or objectives-be those economic, touristic, social, or environmental. In all cases, this activation or leveraging requires the input of human, financial, and physical resources, as well as time (Green, Chalip, Taks, Misener, in revision). The creation of local partnerships and coordination efforts are specifically highlighted as important underlying processes to create desired outcomes in the

context of non-mega sport events. Their smaller scale facilitates the creation of sustainable local partnership and coordination efforts, and it is this opportunity that makes non-mega events uniquely different from mega events for host communities.

This special issue identifies and extends our understanding of the nature, management and implications of non-mega events. The impacts and strategic outcomes highlighted here have practical value for sport event management and strategy, and advance our understanding of the economic, tourism, and social (including sport participation) consequences of events.

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<sup>i</sup> Four of the seven contributions in this special issue were presented during the Special Issue Workshop on “Impacts and strategic outcomes from non-mega sport events for local communities” hosted during the 21st EASM Conference, on September 12, 2013 in Istanbul (Turkey).

<sup>ii</sup> While environmental impact (e.g., ecological footprint) is an important component with regard to sustainability of sport events, it has mainly been studied in the context of **mega sport** events (e.g., **Chappelet, 2008**; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Toohey, 2008); no submission on this topic was received for this special issue on **non-mega sport** events. It is therefore not be addressed here.